



DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE

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WCC PRESIDENTS ISSUE PENTECOST MESSAGE

Text of Message
Attached

GENEVA, Switzerland -- The six presidents of the World Council of Churches have issued their annual Pentecost message in which they celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit who "comes to dwell in our lives, produces joy..., gives power to endure, and makes us witnesses of the Kingdom until the ends of the earth!"

The presidents -- one of whom is Episcopalian Cynthia Wedel of Alexandria, Va. -- said the "Spirit descends today upon our churches to call us to share the good news of the Kingdom everywhere. As we see the people and the nations of the world suffering under the bondage of national and social, communal and personal sin, we are called to repentance and reminded of our being missionaries of the Spirit, witnesses to the Kingdom."

On the theme, "Your Kingdom Come," the World Council leaders said, "We join our voices not only to those of races and cultures different from our own, but also to those of all generations who continue in their intercessions for all of us until the day comes when the Kingdom will be fully manifested."

The presidents noted that the May 12-25 World Conference on Mission and Evangelism in Melbourne, Australia, closes on the Day of Pentecost 1980, May 25. That conference's theme is also "Your Kingdom Come." The presidents' message called on Christians to join the participants in that conference "in the hope that the findings of the conference will prove to be an inspiration for the life of the churches."

Episcopal Bishop Frank S. Cervený of the Diocese of Florida will be one of the participants at the Melbourne conference. The Rev. A. Wayne Schwab, Evangelism and Renewal Officer at the Episcopal Church Center in New York, will be an observer.

Philip Potter, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, in releasing the presidents' Pentecost message, said, "The concern of the Council for a just, participatory and sustainable society is centered in the call of Christ to seek first God's Kingdom and his justice. Thus, the call to unity, mission and service is a summons to pray, work and wait for the coming of the Kingdom and to declare and show forth the signs of its presence in the risen Lord through the Holy Spirit."

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PENTECOST 1980

Message from the Presidents of the World Council of Churches

Peace, grace, and fellowship of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Today, all Christian churches celebrate the feast of Pentecost! As our prayers and praise cover the world, we rejoice in the fact that we are also expressing more fully our Christian unity. Today also marks the final event of the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism in Melbourne, Australia, on the theme "Your Kingdom Come." We are with those gathered in Melbourne in the prayer of Our Lord: "Your Kingdom Come," and join them in the hope that the findings of the Conference will prove to be an inspiration for the life of the churches.

As the disciples asked Jesus about the coming of the Kingdom, so we also pray: "Your Kingdom Come".... The answer which Our Lord gave them is also valid for us: be assured, the Father knows the date and the hour. In spite of the Cross on Golgatha and the human failures which invite us to despair, God is still in command! He has the final word. Meanwhile, we do not sit idle while waiting for the Kingdom! The Holy Spirit has been granted. God in us! The Spirit that was present in the Creation of all things comes to dwell in our lives, produces joy (Rom. 14:17), gives power to endure, and makes us witnesses of the Kingdom until the ends of the earth!

The Holy Spirit is a missionary Spirit. Jesus came, anointed by the Spirit (Luke 4:18) to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom to the poor. The same Spirit descends today upon our churches to call us to share the good news of the Kingdom everywhere. As we see the people and the nations of the world suffering under the bondage of national and social, communal and personal sin, we are called to repentance and reminded of our being missionaries of the Spirit, witnesses to the Kingdom. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not the private property of Christians. It is intended for all people, and specially for the poor, those to whom the Kingdom is promised (Luke 6:20).

The Holy Spirit brings us to, and keeps us in, the communion of the saints, that "cloud of witnesses" of yesterday and today who surround and support us as we struggle for faithfulness in our own belonging to the Kingdom. The many who, in the name of Jesus Christ, surrender their lives in self-sacrifice for the creation of a new day for their communities, belong to the Kingdom! In the power of the Holy Spirit they remain in touch

with us in that communion of the saints which is one of the richest experiences of Christian prayer. The in-dwelling presence of the Holy Spirit keeps us all united in faith, love and hope. When we pray: "Your Kingdom Come," we join our voices not only to those of races and cultures different from our own, but also to those of all generations who continue in their intercessions for all of us until the day comes when the Kingdom will be fully manifested.

"Your Kingdom Come" is our prayer for today. Let this be our supporting vision for the days to come.

The Presidents of the World Council of Churches :

Hon. President: The Rev. Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, Geneva, Switzerland

His Holiness Ilia II, Catholicos and Patriarch of all Georgia, Georgian SSR

The Honorable Mrs. Justice A.R. Jiagge, Accra, Ghana

Prof. José Miguez-Bonino, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Dr. T.B. Simatupang, Jakarta-Pusat, Indonesia

Archbishop Olof Sundby, Uppsala, Sweden

Dr. Cynthia Wedel, Alexandria, Va., U.S.A.

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